AN EVENING *at* THE NORLANDS

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September 1st, 1903

THE TRIBUNE PRINTING COMPANY
MINNEAPOLIS
1903

PS536
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Dec. 5-1903
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To W. D. W.

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IN THE COUNTRY

THERE is a valley in the world, where in winter there is only the wind and soft white snow that is seldom trodden by men. The wind fills it in through openings in the distant hills. It sweeps around the valley and whistles in the branches of the lean old trees.

The world outside is full of unrest, of strife, of hard living, of noises. It grates and grinds on nerves, and the fine souls of men. Their tired voices rise tense and shrill on tired air. They drag their limbs in jerky haste, and their hands twitch ever nervously.

There is not much rest in the world without. In the cities nature is distorted crudely to fit the fancy of these men—who ever running, reach the end of life gasping and out of breath. Their minds, turning like wheels grasp at rigid things, man-made. Their toes turn down the paths trodden by millions like them. Fainting souls fall by the way and those behind leap over and are speeding on. Banner-bearers press boldly to the front, wave their signals high above the seething crowd. The poles break often and the

colours drop, and a wild fanatic waves a rag in his naked hand or soberly reaches his goal with tattered pennant bravely mounting on a feeble breeze.

Sometimes they squeeze through life, these men, unseeing and unseen, and draw their breath and gasp perhaps at the backward look of life unlived. Sometimes they weep through, sorely pressed, with hands stretched out to help, and hearts heavy with too much knowledge.

Heigh-ho, and the wind sweeps over them—buffets them sometimes—sometimes lulls them. And at night beats at their casement and cries to them the pity of it all. The same wind too that blows in the bare old trees and sends the fine untrodden snow sifting down the sunbeams.

But in the valley the winter now has gone, and the spring, and summer—and nature with girded loins is speeding to the finish. The wind ripples through wide fields of rye and oats, and stirs the bearded little husks filled with firm sweet grain. The golden-rod is marching gloriously along the highways and the sumac shakes a sturdy fist of dull red plush. Queen Anne has laid away her bobbins and is drawing in a mesh of wide white lace across the fields. The clematis

is climbing in mad haste along the old gray walls, is bursting into sudden feathery flurries and seeding as she runs. The elder-berry stands knee-deep in the thickets with little globules full of rich red wine, and at its side the tiny lilac-tinted asters peer palely midst the black-eyed Susans and the golden-rod. And right and left the patient apple-trees bend weary arms, while nature with a reckless brush daubs the shining apple cheeks with red and pink and russet.

In the woods the air is close with balsam and rich crushed ferns, and under foot the way is soft with moss and brown pine needles. The toad-stools cling with cold and bloodless clasp to the rotting trees, or start a sudden growth in the loose black soil. They poise and tremble on their flesh-like fragile stalks, spread a shrinking canopy to catch the dew, and shrivel at a sunbeam's touch. The cold spring bubbles in a bowl of moss, swells to its rim, slips, and running over, leaks into the sweet pine-scented soil.

Sometimes on the crisp, cool air comes the ring and swing of axes, and the crash of staggering pines with boughs outstretched and wildly clutching. The air is pungent with sweet gums and running sap. All raw and bleeding, they

are borne to the distant village, where the river runs with fine pink dust and the air throbs with the hum of wheels and the high whine of sudden saws.

In the night a flash of yellow runs like lightning through the valley. The maples trail their boughs in running dyes of red and orange, and in the morning wave them dripping wet with colour. The forests mellow as they stand, with alone untouched the fringes and fine plumage of the fragrant evergreens. The bitter-sweet crisps and shows a twining trail of vivid orange berries. The nuts split in shining cracks and burst and fall. The squirrels skip and chatter through the branches of the trees with switching tails and swollen cheeks.

The corn has waved its last green pennants, the sheeny silken wrappings have turned and crisped, and tossed a singed brown tassel from every well-groomed ear. The cows tread and rustle through the harsh old stalks, and down the empty aisles lie great round pumpkins blandly filling out their yellow sides. The last potatoes have been dug and wheeled away, pink-skinned and warty, to blanch and ripen in firm winter bins. The carrots have their roots and whiskers

shaken, and are laid beside low piles of dull red beets. In the fields the men and boys bend and hurl their final forkfuls at the high-heaped moving mounds of hay. But work is over and the harvest moon looms huge and silently above the hills.

In the valley the night is cold, and old men sitting at their fires gaze with tranquil eyes at the birch logs snapping out their wealth of fragrant flame. The light flickers on the rafters and the stained old walls. It plays about the fingers of the patient women bending at their needles, and fills the faithful eyes of the old dog on the hearth.

In the dim, low barn the air is heavy with the breath of high-packed hay, and the strong, sweet smell of cows. The steam is rising gently from their flanks, and they stamp drowsily and kneel to sleep.

The branches of the old tree creak—a gaunt bough stiffly stirs, and taps a window in the low eaved roof. A plaintive wind sighs at the casement, and turns a rusty vane on the white old church.

THE NORLANDS

THERE'S a vigor in the Norlands, like the vigor of the sea,
There's a peace spread o'er its uplands, like a wide eternity,
It is tracing out a meaning, that is meant for you and me,
In truth that marches on.

It is written on the granite rock, and sings above the pine,
A lofty summons clearly struck, I fain would make it mine;
A fixed and noble purpose, a spirit true and fine,
In strength that marches on.

There be those who heard the summons, and who hammered out alone
Its vital meaning to the world, and made its beauty known;
May we, their children, worthy be, to make their aims our own,
In life that marches on.

[To be sung to the music of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."]

NEW ENGLAND

THOU art, New England, like the Greek of old,
He had thy trick, and wove a thread of gold
Within the matchless tapestry of years;
Thus be the story told in smiles or tears,
Where e'er the golden thread may let us seek,
Stands unforgetable, the deathless Greek;
Hellenic the inception, bidding place
Within the warp and woof of thine own race
The glowing thread, that marks each one thine own;
From sea to sea, and to the farthest zone
We find thy children. Deep in every face,
In clear-writ word and action, do we trace
New England's spirit, there half dreaming, see
Thy hills, and strong serenity.

GRANDMOTHER

DEEP summer twilight, and the widening rest
That dawns upon the spirit like a star.
A vagrant wind trails softly from the West
The spent day's benediction. From the far
And constant hills comes vivid memory
Of one who made their poise her very own.
From out the tissue of her blood and bone
She gave the world in sons what she had won
From Nature's largeness—clean and strong and sane;
Hers was the moral muscle, aggressive brain
That moulds world-history. Priceless legacy!
In noblest living be it understood,
Interpreted; the quickened prophecy
And deep-writ message of strong motherhood.

OLD GLORY SPEAKS

ABOVE the Norlands, day by day,
Her watch Old Glory keeps;
She scans the hilltops far away,
She slumbers not, nor sleeps.

When night winds whisper in her folds,
Her bunting stirs and swells,
And if one listens one may hear
The story that she tells.

"A race of standard bearers sprung
From soil on which I stand;
The spirits of old comrades still
Salute me on this land.

One tossed with me upon the seas,
Through battle cry and flame,
He watched with me, he proudly shared
My wounds, and blessed my name;
Today I watch with him who cared,
Our friendship is the same.

One marched with me on land and
fought
Through hurricane and roar;
One stood a faithful sentinel,
Beside the nation's door;
The State he governed served me well,
While he the standard bore.

One served me in a land where winds
Of revolution moan,
And when from peril others fled,
We two were left alone;
Unguarded, while the country bled,
We stayed to guard our own.

Another carried me across
Great prairies, yet untilled,
And where I waved, new cities grew,
And starving men were filled;
The wheat fields marched in glad
review,
And by his hand were drilled.

Although he fortified our laws,
Through years of earnest toil,
We still behold this labor done,
Which time cannot despoil;
For he who plants a flag has won
A battle for the soil.

And in the future this same blood
Shall answer to my call;
New standard bearers shall arise
To offer me their all.

New standard bearers of this race—
Upright and unafraid;
The steps of patriots unborn
Are marching to my aid."

Once more Old Glory's voice is still,
No sound the silence breaks;
Her shadow in the moonlight falls,
The only thing that wakes.

"A TWICE TOLD TALE"

FAR up among the hills of Maine, in that beautiful green country of swelling uplands and fair valleys, dimpled with sweet lakes, where waving pines and upward-pointing firs lend their soft shadows and sweet warm breath to the long summer days; where fleecy clouds chase each other from west to east in the blue summer sky, and the day is fair, and living is a joy. Or, again, when heavy clouds blow in from the east laden with the salt of the distant sea, and the land reflects the blackness of the sky above. And through it all, the sunshine or the mist, the outline of the hills sweeps on serenely, and from their summits comes the ever-bracing tonic air.

If the joy of living comes with the perfect summer day, no less comes it when heavy clouds and fierce strong winds stir man to his very depths with the duty of life, and joy is added to by the quickening sense of duty. For it is true that among these everlasting hills has been born a race of men, through whom our country has been ably served.

From the earliest days when the red man roamed at will among Maine's trackless forests, and the bolder spirits among the Massachusetts colonists set forth to conquer and subdue new lands, and Maine became their Mecca, down through the youth of our Republic, a century of years, Maine has ever sent to the front her quota of brave men, men of muscle and brain and heart, to help in our country's needs.

One home I know, and there are many such, perhaps less strong in numbers, where the pulse of right and duty and brave living throbbed ever on, nor stopped, nor even faltered in its course one instant.

In this home dwelt, from early manhood, one whose nature was run in a mould of no mean form, and from whose genial warmth flowed hospitality, good cheer and constant kindliness of spirit, and a quick responsiveness withal to every sort of interest.

And with him dwelt the wife of his early choice—a strong, true soul, well fitted to rear brave sons and wise, good daughters. All questions of the day, and in those days were many stirring ones, were eagerly welcomed by this pioneer of Maine.

He loved to read, and all new theories and schemes of men did please his mind. But most of all he loved the doings of his country, and through long winter evenings would he read and talk of those things which were uppermost in his country's mind. The fierce debates which heralded the coming storm, destined to break and dash itself to pieces against the constitution, the rock on which our country's greatness has been built. And after the first blow was struck, in those sad days when brother fought against brother, and the North and South were hostile camps, when great questions of right and wrong were being thrashed out in the halls of Congress or on the battle-field, when at the bidding of their country great men came forth from North and East and West, responding to her call for help. It was his privilege to see his sons, seven in number, each answer to that call, and do his uttermost for the Union's cause, whether at home, directing them and helping in wise councils, or in the thick of battle, on land or sea.

Through all those days, he never had to feel the sorrow of seeing one son of his swerve for one instant from the truths he taught them in their early years. But ever did they remain true

to his teaching, as the needle to the North star, under which he lived.

And during those last, long years, after the sharer of his life had been called hence, and the sweet light of day was taken from him, his children loved to gather at his side and listen to his stories and to his words of wisdom, and his home was always the home of hospitality to all who chose to come.

His creed was big, and never for a moment was his faith in goodness shaken, or his fine spirit clouded, but shone serenely forth to gladden and to light his children and his friends, until the day he drew his latest breath.

"THE EARTHLY PARADISE"

THE grand old poet Dante wrote of "Paradiso" fair,
Its groves of wondrous blossoms, whose perfumes filled the air.
Its streams of living waters flowing o'er sands of gold,
Of birds of brilliant plumage, and heavenly songs he told.
Another quaint old writer, even now well known to fame,
A quiet spot has imaged, "Happy Valley" is its name.
Within that charmed circle, no sorrow comes nor care,
Only the gay and happy can ever enter there.
In days of old, the story runs, into this sheltered nook
The monarchs sent their princely sons with teacher, priest and book,
Far from the maddening whirl of life, secure from wickedness and strife.
Hung in an ancient gallery in a distant foreign town,
Is a curious old picture done by an artist of renown.
The painter shows a sunny lake, with fountain spreading wide,
With crowds of men and women, all bathing in its tide;
Old men emerge with vigor, all ills and wrinkles gone,
From age and its discomforts, completely, surely shorn.
Poor lone and palsied women, a forlorn and crippled band,
Change to rosy, blooming damsels, when they return to land.

Now all these strange and curious things that I have briefly told,
We read in ancient history, or find in legends old.
And it may surprise one, indeed, 'tis odd to say
That in our modern country, in this our later day,
A chosen few, a friendly and highly favored band,
Have dwelt together pleasantly, in an enchanted land.
A paradise indeed as fair as ever yet was sung
By poet or musician, in any land or tongue.
Here groves of solemn pine trees are proudly lifting high
Their glistening spicy needles, toward a cloudless sky.
Here elm and oak are struggling to cast a grateful shade
O'er winding woodland pathways, with carpets overlaid
With moss and fern and fallen leaves, to ease the tired feet,
And strive to fill the balmy air with perfume wild and sweet;
Here dim and shady aisles of green are opening everywhere,
Leading to "Happy Valley," as fresh and green and fair
As that in which Prince Rasselas, beneath the summer sky
Listened to words of wisdom and dry philosophy.
Another pathway beckons, whose tangled struggling vine,
And graceful, drooping garlands together intertwine.
Far deep into the forest, amid the close set trees,
Where all is still save rustling leaves, just lifted by the breeze;
Hid underneath an old gray rock with velvet mosses crowned,

A crystal streamlet gushes forth, and dances o'er the ground,
One glance we take, one draught we quaff, and then we
know the truth;
This is the fabled fountain, of ever lasting youth.
The very same that painter tried with his best art to show,
To these bewildered mortals, so many years ago.
We all have read of Genii, those fairies great and small,
Who sometimes answer kindly, when tired mortals call.
And some of us in youth have wished, the fairies' gift were
ours,
That we might own the lamp that gave Aladdin wondrous
powers.
Alas, the ancient Genii no longer to us come,
But we've a newer, modern one abiding in our home.
In a fair and stately dwelling with hedges set around,
The Genie of our Paradise, amid his work is found.
His kind, unwearying efforts for us, have put to shame
The vaunted deeds that celebrate the young Aladdin's fame.
Obedient but invisible, his willing helpers fly
To execute his orders in the twinkling of an eye.
Bright streams of living waters, from many a hidden spring,
To refresh the faint and weary, the nimble spirits bring.
Rough pathways are made easy, and smiling homes arise
To add content and beauty to this, our Paradise.
We thank and love our Genie true, and pray he still may
reign

For many, many happy years, over this fair domain.
When future generations of his kin and children come
To breathe the peaceful atmosphere of this ancestral home,
They too, will bless his memory as they view the fruitful
land,
And see in all, the workings of his most generous hand.

AN ACROSTIC

THE happy hours, too swiftly sped,
Have hastened Autumn's onward tread,
Each day now tells of summer fled;
No longer voice of joyous bird,
Or cricket's busy chirp is heard,
Red leaves fall, when the branch is stirred;
Low hang the apples on the bough,
And fragrant hay piles high the mow.
Near draws the hour of parting now;
Dear days, would we might stay your flight—
Say not "Good-bye," only "Good-night."

ADDENDA

"That Livermore Cheese" - - *L. M. W.*
With presentation of plate

An Angel Unawares - - - *C. F.*

"THAT LIVERMORE CHEESE"

THE menu may be very good,
Of finest quality, the food,
The guests in happy exaltation
From copious draughts of "consolation,"
But yet the feast is not complete,
Until the host in accents sweet,
Calls—"If you please,
Bring on the cheese."

Oh, cheese, thou fair and fragrant thing,
To thy chaste disc, aloud, I sing!
Thou emblem of good fellowship,
As in thy lovely rim we dip,
Our quickened pulse beats strong and fast,
With memories fond of cheeses past.

No cheeses brought from foreign shore
Excel that cheese of Livermore;
The classic cheese of story old
That bravely down the mountain rolled,
And shattered with its "heart of oak"
The granite rock, at one fell stroke.

And many a noble cheese I ween
Has vanished from the world unseen,
Its only merit being able
To appetize a frugal table.
To all such cheeses now we raise
A grateful tribute in their praise.

Now autumn days are drawing nigh,
Its chill winds through the forests fly,
We happy ones who've dwelt together
In sunshine and in rainy weather,
Would fain express our gratitude
To you who are so true and good;
Your watchfulness from day to day
Bid care and trouble fade away,

With much deep thought we tried to find
Something to suit your artist mind—
We found you had no handsome plate,
When dining at a feast of state,
On which 'twas suitable to send
"Frummage," your boyhood's early friend

We hope and trust our silver dish
May prove the very one you wish,
And that with sentiments of pride,
You'll view its shining silver side,
When in your lofty dining hall
You sweetly to the butler call,
"Now, if you please,
Bring on the Cheese."

AN ANGEL UNAWARES

A presence hovers through our house,
And figures in our tales;
We never see her face—but still
We hear of Mrs. Scales.

Beside the mention of her name,
All other jesting fails;
She cheers our hearts from morn till eve,
The omni-present Scales.

We know we can rely on her,
No matter who else fails;
Though other jokes may pass away,
We still have Mrs. Scales.

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